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# Sepp Holzer's Permaculture: A Practical Guide To Small-Scale, Integrative Farming And Gardening



## Synopsis

Sepp Holzer farms steep mountainsides in Austria 1,500 meters above sea level. His farm is an intricate network of terraces, raised beds, ponds, waterways and tracks, well covered with productive fruit trees and other vegetation, with the farmhouse neatly nestling amongst them. This is in dramatic contrast to his neighbors' spruce monocultures. In this book, Holzer shares the skill and knowledge acquired over his lifetime. He covers every aspect of his farming methods, not just how to create a holistic system on the farm itself, but how to make a living from it. Holzer writes about everything from the overall concepts, down to the practical details. In Sepp Holzer's Permaculture readers will learn:

- How he sets up a permaculture system
- The fruit varieties he has found best for permaculture growing
- How to construct terraces, ponds, and waterways
- How to build shelters for animals and how to work with them on the land
- How to cultivate edible mushrooms in the garden and on the farm and much more!

Holzer offers a wealth of information for the gardener, smallholder or alternative farmer yet the book's greatest value is the attitudes it teaches. He reveals the thinking processes based on principles found in nature that create his productive systems. These can be applied anywhere.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I bought this book with the hope that I would gain practical, applicable information about Sepp Holzer's methods. Instead, I got a somewhat random description of his farm and farming style, with a frustrating lack of specificity in many areas. If you are looking for a book that will explain how to

implement permaculture design principles, specifics on how to manage pasture-fed pigs and other animals, or detailed guidance on plant seed mixtures and interplanting, I would recommend looking elsewhere. I'd have been less frustrated by this book if it was the first time I encountered the ideas of Permaculture, pasture-raising animals, heirloom fruit trees and so forth, but it isn't. I've already read Fukuoka, Mollison, Holmgren, Stamets, Logsdon, and Coleman. All of these other author's books give much more concrete, useable advice, and cover their respective area in more depth and specificity than this one. For example, the description of the book says that it covers "How to build shelters for animals and how to work with them on the land". Sounds great, and also one of the subjects I bought the book looking to deepen my knowledge of. The description of how to build the earth shelters is good, if cursory (9 pages, with pictures), but the actual working with animals part is only 17 pages long! These 17 pages (with many pictures), give an overview of his philosophy, a brief rundown of a few breeds he has used, a short description of how he works the animals and that's pretty much it. With 17 pages to cover pigs, cows, other bovines, and poultry, no great detail is possible. I learned exactly one new thing: that he mixes snails in his pig's feed to encourage them to forage for snails.

I have been looking for a book that would guide me in creating a garden and maybe even a farm that I can spend the least amount of time and money maintaining yet have better quality produce than the best store can provide. Sepp seems to be the best at this lazy farming approach from anything else I have found so far and appears to produce better quality produce than his competition with much less work and very little - I suppose - ongoing investment. His techniques seem too good to be true. It helps to watch Sepp Holzer's youtube videos as a lot of information discussed in those is not covered in this book. For instance, Sepp installs fruit trees between the raised beds, and then uses a mix of 50 ancient/heirloom seeds that he just tosses in the raised beds by hand when they are first built (no mention if he lets annuals and biennials reseed themselves or whether he does this every year). Yes, he doesn't pre-start them early even at 1500 meters above sea level! Impressive! He says it is "alle wichtigste" most important to have a mixture of vegetables and herbs growing around his fruit trees. Just about everything he recommends is anti-conventional and not what one learns in schools, or from other "experienced" farmers or other gardening books. He recommends growing full-sized hardy trees rather than the preferred easy-to-pick dwarf trees because the latter are more prone to problems. He also never fertilizes trees with commercial chemicals though he does provide a few recipes for making his own fertilizers. In his experience trees that are fertilized become heavily dependent on the chemicals and grow disproportionately which

makes them weaker. He also teaches against pruning, all of which I embrace if it is less work.

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